

Be ye also ready.

727
A
Funeral-Discourse

Occasion'd by

The much lamented Death

O F

Mr. Thomas Adams,

Who Died in the 23d Year of his Age.

P R E A C H E D

In St. Thomas's Southwark,

July 10th, 1737.

By HENRY READ.

L O N D O N :

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W. Musgrave!



Matthew xxiv. 44.

*Therefore, be ye also ready;
for in such an Hour as you
think not, the Son of Man
cometh.*

IT was but this Day Fortnight I was obliged to give you a *Funeral-Discourse* on occasion of the Death of one of the most ancient Members of this Congregation, Mrs. Warburton: I am now called to assist you in improving the much-lamented Death of one of the *youngest*, Mr. Tho. Adams, who was well and dead in the Space of about eight Days.

Many Circumstances concurred to have rendered his Life very desirable. His *Parents* had Reason to hope his Life would have been a Credit to their Family, and the Comfort of their declining Years. *We* had ground to hope he would have been an Ornament and Support of this Christian Society, and a Blessing to the

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World, by his Prayers, Example and Substance. But it hath pleased the wise and sovereign Arbitrer of Life and Death to defeat our Desires and Expectations, and call us to mourn the quick Removal of a lovely Youth in the 23d Year of his Age.

It was his own Desire on his Death-Bed, that I should address to you a serious Discourse on this Occasion, which I shall endeavour to do from the Words of our Saviour; *Therefore be ye also ready; for in such an Hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh.*

In the preceding Part of the Chapter, Christ had been foretelling the Destruction of *Jerusalem*, and the End of *that* Church and State: He had given the Disciples many Signs of his coming to execute Vengeance on the hardened Jews, and had told them, that the present Generation should not pass away till his Prediction was accomplished. Verse 34. *Verily, I say unto you, This Generation shall not pass, till all these Things be fulfilled: Heaven and Earth shall pass away, but my Words shall not pass away:* The precise Time was, indeed, a Secret locked up in his Father's Breast, Verse 36. *Of that Day and Hour knoweth no Man, no, not the Angels of Heaven, but my Father only;* but it should be very sudden and surprizing, like the Flood in the Days of Noah; *for as they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in Marriage, until the Day that*
Noah

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Noah enter'd into the Ark, and knew not until the Flood came and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be.

Upon this he groundeth an Exhortation to constant Watchfulness in the 42d verse; *Watch therefore, for ye know not what Hour the Lord cometh*; and in the Words of the Text, *Therefore be ye also ready, for in such an Hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh*.

But the Words may fitly be accommodated to the present Occasion; and then, by the Coming of the Son of Man, we must understand his putting an End to our Lives, and removing us into the unseen World; and taken in this Sense they contain two Things that deserve our Regard, and that may be of general Use.

I. An earnest Exhortation to be in a continual Readiness for Death: *Be ye also ready*.

II. An awful Motive to enforce the Exhortation, *viz.* Our Ignorance of the particular Season, and because it may come when we least of all think of or expect it: *In such an Hour, or Season, as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh*.

I. We have an Exhortation to be in a continual Readiness: *Be ye also ready*.

There is an *habitual* and an *actual* Readiness for the Coming of our Lord by Death: Then
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are we *habitually* ready, when we are in such a State, wherein we may die with Safety, our great Affairs being settled, and our main eternal Interests secured: And then are we *actually* ready, when, beside the Safety of our State, we are, in a proper Frame to go forth and meet the Son of Man, and yeild up our Souls with Joy, from a well-grounded Hope of our Interest in the Favour of God, thro' Christ, and a chearful Expectation of future Happiness. The *former* is absolutely necessary; the *latter* is highly desirable, that we may live and die with solid Peace, and have an abundant Entrance administered into the heavenly Kingdom. I shall describe each of these as plainly as I can, in a few Particulars.

1st. We should be *habitually* prepared for the Coming of the Son of Man, or for Death, and never be easy until we are in such a State wherein we may leave this World with Safety, and be able to appear before our Judge without Danger of being cast and condemned. For this End two Things are necessary, by the Gospel Constitution, *Repentance* towards God, and *Faith* in the Lord Jesus Christ.

1. Repentance towards God. This consists in such a Sense of the Evil of all our past Transgressions, as puts us upon a sorrowful Confession and sincere Reformation. We must declare our Iniquities, and be sorry for our Sins,
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and have no more to do with that accursed Thing which God's Soul hateth ; encouraged by the Goodness of God, and the many Promises of Holy Scripture, *Isa. lv. 7. Let the Wicked forsake his Ways, and the unrighteous Man his Thoughts, and let him turn to the Lord, and he will have Mercy on him, and abundantly pardon. Isaiah i. 16, 17, 18. Wash ye, make ye clean, put away the Evil of your Doings from before mine Eyes ; cease to do Evil, learn to do well ; seek Judgment, relieve the Oppressed, judge the Fatherless, plead for the Widow ; Come now and let us reason together, saith the Lord ; though your Sins be as Scarlet, they shall be white as Snow, though they be red like Crimson, they shall be as Wool. 1 John i. 9. If we confess our Sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our Sins, and to cleanse us from all Unrighteousness.*

While we are wallowing in the Mire of impure Lusts, indulging corrupt Passions and Appetites, impenitent and unreformed, God can take no Pleasure in us ; *He hateth all the Workers of Iniquity, and is angry with the Wicked every Day* : And therefore such are by no means prepared to die, and appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ ; 'tis the Guilt, Pollution and Dominion of Sin, that arms Death with its poisonous Sting, and makes it a dreadful Passage to Misery, according to the Decree of the Gospel, *The Wages of Sin is Death*, Rom. vi. 23.

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2. Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is absolutely necessary to our being *habitually* ready for his Coming by Death.

He is the promised Messiah, and *one Mediator between God and Man, who died for our Offences, and rose again for our Justification*; and *if you believe not that I am He*, said Christ to the Jews, *you shall die in your Sins*, John viii. 24. Mark xvi. 16. *He that believeth not shall be damned*. John iii. 18. *He that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the Name of the only begotten Son of God*.

Now *that Faith*, which is necessary to habitual Preparedness for Death, is not a bare Assent of the Mind, but such a firm Persuasion of the Truth of the Gospel, as produceth a steady Resolution to hearken to Christ, as the Great Prophet of the Church; to trust in him as the High-Priest of our Profession, and obey him in all Things, as we have Ability and Opportunity, by a sober, righteous and godly Life. James ii. 17. *Faith, if it hath not Works is dead, being alone*. Ver. 26. *As the Body without the Spirit is dead, so Faith without Works is dead also*. He is the Author of eternal Salvation to them that obey him.

And when we have thus repented of and forsaken every Way of Wickedness, and have devoted ourselves to Christ, as our Saviour and Lord, we are ready, as to our State, for Death, and whenever it comes, it will not be a fatal Surprise.

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2d. But beside this, we should labour after an *actual* Readiness for the Coming of our Lord, which I shall describe in the following Particulars.

1. We must exercise constant Care and Watchfulness against all Sin, and unwearied Endeavours to gain a more complete Deliverance from the remaining Disorders of our Souls.

Having broken off and renounced every Way of Wickedness, it must be our habitual Care to return no more to Folly, that no Iniquity may regain Dominion over us: Being justified from the Guilt of our past Transgressions, we must live as free from Sin as possible; especially from gross, presumptuous Sins, which make a Breach between God and the Soul: Thus Christ exhorted his Disciples, *Luke xxi 34. Take heed to your selves, lest at any Time your Hearts be overcharged with Surfeiting and Drunkenness, and Cares of this Life, and so that Day come upon you unawares.*

As we are surrounded with many subtle, malicious, indetatigable Adversaries, and alluring Objects, and the best of Men are frail, imperfect Creatures, we have need to *watch and pray that we enter not into Temptation; for though the Spirit is willing, the Flesh is weak, Matt. xxvi. 41.* Our Souls must daily ascend to God in such Petitions as these: "*Cleanse thou me, O God, from secret Faults; keep back thy Servant from presumptuous Sins; let them not have Dominion over*
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“ *me, Psal. xix. 12, 13. Create in me a clean Heart, and renew a right Spirit within me,*
“ *Psal. li. 10. Assist me to subdue every irregular*
“ *Passion and Appetite, to out-grow my Weak-*
“ *nesses and Infirmities, and to perfect Holiness*
“ *in thy Fear.* ”

2. We should endeavour to set our worldly Affairs in the best Order we can, that we may have as little Disturbance, as possible, about them, on a sick and dying Bed, and prevent Quarrels and Law-suits after our Death, 2 Kings xx. 1. *Set thine House in Order, for thou shalt die and not live.*

3. We must be diligent to fill up every Station and Relation of Life with the proper Virtues and Duties thereof, and to keep a Conscience void of Offence towards God and Man.

He who sent us into the World hath assigned Work suitable to every Age, Station, and Relation; and *He* will be found in the greatest Readiness for his Lord's Coming, who is most careful in improving his Time and Talents to the Honour of his Master, and the Good of his Fellow-Creatures.

And what doth the Lord our God require of us, *but to do justly, love Mercy, and walk humbly before him?* Micah vi. 8. To be strictly true and honest in our Words and Actions; and to do to others as we may reasonably expect to be done by; to be kind and loving,
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and tender-hearted, and take Pleasure in relieving the Wants, and alleviating the Burdens and Sorrows of our Fellow-Creatures, and promoting the Publick Good; and to be as serious and exact as we can, in worshipping God in Publick, in the Family, and in Secret. Matt. xxiv. 46. *Blessed is that Servant, whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing.* Again,

4. Our actual Readiness for Death consists in the lively Exercise of every Grace, especially Faith, Love, Hope, Patience and Resignation to the Will of God.

Faith must be strong and active: For then am I in a good Frame to die, when I am fully satisfied of the Truth of the Gospel, the All-sufficiency of Christ, and the Certainty of his Promises; and from a Consciousness of my sincere Compliance with the Terms of the Gospel, can venture into the unseen World, relying on the Love and Faithfulness of God my Saviour. I know in whom I have believed, and am persuaded he will keep that Soul I have committed to him in a way of well-doing. We should endeavour to inflame our Love more and more, to God and the Redeemer, and to give the most substantial Proof of it, by a zealous Obedience. Our Hope and Trust in God should be steady and unshaken. *Job xiii. 15. Tho' he slay me, yet I will trust in him. Psal. lvi. 3. What Time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.* Patience should have its perfect Exercise under

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der all the Trials and Afflictions of the present Life, and the Sickness and Pains of dissolving Nature, and then we should be entirely resigned to the Will of God, with Reference to the Time and Place, and Manner, and all the Circumstances of our Death: *Behold the Servant of the Lord, let him do with me as seemeth good in his Sight: Not my Will, but thine be done.*

5. We must be growing into a greater Weanedness from, and Indifference to all present Enjoyments, from a Conviction of their Vanity and Emptiness, and the superior Excellency of spiritual and heavenly Things.

This Earth is not our resting Place, nor any thing in it fit to be our Portion and Happiness. *We have here no continuing City, but look for one to come. Our Conversation, or Citizenship, is in Heaven, from whence we look for a Saviour, Phil. iii.*

20 We are, by Profession, Pilgrims and Strangers and Travellers, and therefore our Affections must not be attached to the Accommodations we meet with in the Way. We ought, indeed, to be very thankful to God for every favourable Circumstance and agreeable Relation, but if our Hearts are too much set on any created Good, we shall find it difficult to take Leave thereof at Death. *1 Cor. vii. 29, 30. The Time is short, therefore they that have Wives should be as if they had none, and they that weep as though they wept not, and they that rejoyce, as tho' they rejoyced not, and they that buy,*

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buy, as tho' they possessed not, and they that use this World as not over-using it; for the Fashion of this World passeth away. In the last Place,

6. A Willingness to die, and longing, regular Desires to depart and be with Christ, is the Perfection of an actual Readiness.

This, indeed, is a high Attainment, to which few comparatively arrive. Death, considered as a Separation of Soul and Body, and a bidding Farewel to all our Friends and worldly Enjoyments, is terrible and shocking to Nature; and nothing but a strong Faith, and the lively Hopes of a blessed Immortality, can give us, so far, the Victory over it, as to inspire us with a longing, judicious Desire to depart. This was the happy Frame of Saint *Paul*, after many Years eminent Service and patient Suffering for the Sake of Christ, from a full Assurance of a glorious Reward; and this every Christian should, at least, be praying and labouring after, by growing in Grace, aspiring after high Degrees of Holiness, and frequent, devout Contemplations of the Glory to be revealed at the Coming of our Lord; for tho' it is not absolutely necessary to our Safety or future Happiness, yet it is very honourable to Religion and comfortable to ourselves, to be able to say with St. *Paul*, 2 Cor. v. 1, 8. *We are confident and willing rather to be absent from the Body and present with the Lord: For we know that if our earthly House*

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House of this Tabernacle were dissolved, we have a Building of God, an House not made with Hands, eternal in the Heavens.

And thus I have described *that Readiness*, both as to our State and Frame, which all of us ought to be labouring after. *Be ye also ready.*

II. Let us attend to the Motive, by which our Lord enforceth the Exhortation; *for in such an Hour as you think not, the Son of Man cometh.* In which two powerful Arguments to continual Readiness are imported; “The
“Certainty of the Thing itself, and the Un-
“certainty of the particular Time or Season.” Verse 42. *Ye know neither the Day nor the Season*; and in the Text, *In such a Season as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh.*

I. Nothing is more certain than Death itself: *It is appointed to Men once to die, and the Living know that they shall die.* That this is the general Law for Mankind, needs no other Proof, but daily Experience. We continually see or hear of one or other of our Friends, Acquaintance, Neighbours or Strangers, going off the Stage of Life. *One Generation passeth away and another cometh, Eccles. i. 4. What Man is he that liveth and shall not see Death? Shall he deliver his Soul from the Hand of the Grave? Psal. lxxxix. 48. By one Man Sin entered into the World, and Death by Sin, and so Death*
passed

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passed upon all Men, Rom. v. 12. Every one therefore ought to be in a Readiness for *that* great Change, which will fix us in an unchangeable State of Happiness or Misery. But tho' the Thing itself is certain,

2. Nothing is more uncertain to us than the Season of it. This Secret God hath with equal Wisdom and Goodness concealed from us. We are so far from knowing the *Day*, that we cannot tell in what *Stage* of Life, whether in Childhood or Youth, Manhood or Old Age, we may be called hence. Nay, Death may come in a Season when it is least of all expected: *In an Hour that you think not, the Son of Man cometh.* When we imagine we have the fairest Prospect of many Years to come, and are least apprehensive of Danger; when our Bones are full of Marrow, and our Health seems most firm, a mortal Distemper may suddenly arrest and hurry us away; or an unforeseen Accident may put an End to Life at once: Therefore we ought to be always prepared by a Holy Life, to meet Death with Safety and Comfort; and since we know not which Day will be our last, and are not sure of seeing To-morrow, we should never be easy 'till we are in such a State, that whenever it comes it may put an End to all our Sins and Sorrows, and be an Entrance into eternal Happiness.

APPLI.

APPLICATION.

I shall now proceed to the Practical Improvement of the Words, and of the melancholy Providence that led me to discourse upon them.

1. And here I beg Leave, in the first Place, to address to the mournful Parents of the Deceas'd. Instead of indulging to Grief, closely attend to the Voice of God by this Providence, *Be ye also ready*; for your Advances in Years puts you in Mind that in a little Time the Son of Man will come, and that, according to the Course of Nature, you are nigh unto Death.

A fore Breach hath, indeed, been made on your Family; a tender, hopeful Branch hath been lopped off; and not to mourn would argue Stupidity and Want of Natural Affection: But, Blessed be God, you have no Reason to Sorrow, as those that are without Hope, but to mingle Joy with your Tears, for a Son, not lost, but gone before and advanced.

You had the unspeakable Pleasure to see your Prayers and Instructions crowned with Success, by his remembering his Creator in the Days of his Youth, and early dedicating himself to the Service of God, and the comfortable Hopes he expressed on a Dying-Bed: Having therefore given a Vent to natural Grief, now set yourselves to make a Gain of your Loss, by stirring

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up the Grace of God in you to a lively Exercise, and double Diligence, to be in an actual Readiness for your own approaching Change.

As you are in the Decline of Life, and have many Years been engaged in the Service of the best of Masters, approve the Sincerity of your Christian Profession, by abounding more and more in all the Fruits of Righteousness; by exemplary Holiness of Heart and Life; a growing Weanedness from this World, and earnest Breathings after that eternal Rest which remains for the People of God. Thus let your last Days be your best, and your last Work your best, that you may finish your Course with Joy, and meet your pious departed Friends and Relations on the right Hand of the Judge.

2. I would address to You, the younger Relations, Friends, Acquaintance, and Neighbours of our departed Brother, and to young Persons in general.

The Character of *Mr. Tho. Adams* was so well known, that I need not expatiate much upon it; but Justice to the Dead, and Concern for the Good of the Living, oblige me to mention a few Particulars, to the Honour of Divine Goodness, for your Imitation.

Early Inclinations to Religion happily prevented his being led away by evil Customs and bad Examples into those youthful Lusts, where-
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by many others have laid a Foundation for Shame and Sorrow, and bitter Repentance. He began betimes to seek and to serve the God of his Fathers, in publick and secret; and he found it good for him to draw nigh to God.

With Pleasure I observed and endeavoured to cultivate his good Disposition of Mind, (while he was some Time in my Family, several Years ago) which grew up to a Habit of Goodness, by the Blessing of God on the Ministration of the Word and Ordinances in this Place. He paid a great Regard to the Lord's Day, and delighted in constant Attendance on the Means of Grace; and having committed to Writing at Church, as much as he could of the Sermons, he endeavoured to impress them on his own and others Minds, by Repetition in the Evening at his Father's House. Having devoted himself to God in secret, and come to a judicious Resolution to make Religion the Business of Life, when he was about fifteen Years of Age, he earnestly desired to join with us in keeping up the Remembrance of the Death of Christ at the Lord's Table; justly apprehending it a Duty incumbent upon young Persons, as well as others; and with Pleasure I assisted and encouraged him to perform it in a right Manner, well knowing that young Disciples are peculiarly agreeable to Christ.

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His Piety towards God influenced him to behave well towards all with whom he had to do. He was a very dutiful Son to loving Parents, an affectionate Brother, a faithful Servant, a Blessing to the Family where he was an Apprentice, good-temper'd, kind and compassionate, chearful and affable in Conversation, without Levity or Frothiness; In short, his good Behaviour procured a general Esteem and Love, and render'd his Life very desirable, and his Death greatly lamented.

His last Sickness was a violent Fever, which had carried off a good Master, Mr. *Henry Brown*, and a Fellow-Apprentice, a few Months before. He bore it with Patience and Resignation, neither apprehensive or greatly desirous of Recovery, nor terrified at the Approach of Death, which had lost its Sting. And he expressed a very tender and affectionate Concern for the Spiritual Welfare of his surviving Relations; which I hope they will remember, and wisely profit thereby.

And now were it fit to indulge our Inclination, we should stop here, and weep over the Ashes of our departed Brother; but weeping must not hinder sowing. The Removal of serious young Persons, just setting out in the World, and likely to be eminently holy and
C 2 useful,

useful, is a great Mystery in Providence; but we are sure that the Ways of God, however dark and unaccountable to us, are under the Conduct of perfect Rectitude; and therefore we will be dumb, and not open our Mouths: Not our Will, but his be done. The Lord gave; the Lord made him amiable; the Lord hath taken away, and blessed be the Name of the Lord.

Let this affecting Instance of the Shortness and Uncertainty of Life, and of the Vanity of Man as mortal, not only make a present Impression, but excite to serious, abiding Thoughtfulness about our Souls and another World.

Being dead, he yet speaketh, "*Be ye also ready*; for in an Hour that ye think not, the Son of Man may come to *You*, as he did to *Me*. Remember therefore now your Creator in the Days of your Youth, before the evil Days come, and the Years draw nigh, which are, of all, the most unfit to begin your great Work. Seek God early, and you shall find him: Acquaint yourselves now with him, and be at Peace, thereby Good shall come to you. Flee youthful Lusts, but follow after Holiness."

I have the Pleasure of speaking to many, who have enjoyed the Privilege of an honourable, (I mean) a pious Descent and religious Education:

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Education : 1 Chron. xxviii. 9. *Know you the God of your Fathers, and serve him with an upright Heart and a willing Mind: If you seek him, he will be found of you; but if you forsake him, he will cast you off for ever.*

1. Let me intreat you not to go into the gay, thoughtless Humour of the present Age, which is the Bane of Piety and Virtue, and the chief Ground of Infidelity; but be sober-minded, considerate, dutiful to Parents, faithful to Masters and Mistresses, grave and holy in all manner of Conversation. Follow not a Multitude to do evil. Imitate the Example of the best, not of the most; and study by singular good Behaviour to acquire solid Reputation, and grow in Favour both with God and Man.

2. Converse much with the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise to Salvation; begin and end every Day with secret Prayer; and be you in the Fear of the Lord all the Day long.

3. Remember the Lord's Day to keep it holy, by publicly acknowledging God and the Redeemer in worshiping Assemblies, and communing with your own Hearts at Home, which will minister infinitely greater Satisfaction on a cool Review, than they can have, who turn it into a Day of Idleness or Recreation.

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4. Having acquainted yourselves with the Nature and Design of the Lord's Supper, (which lies plainer in the New Testament than in the Writings of Men) *viz.* to keep up the Memory of the Death of Christ, to profess our Faith and Resolution of Obedience to him, and Communion with all Christians, by eating and drinking in a religious Manner at his Table: Be not afraid to come and declare yourselves the Followers of a Saviour, *who was delivered for your Offences, and rose again for your Justification, Rom. iv. 25. and is able to save to the uttermost them that come to God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make Intercession for them, Heb. vii. 25.*

Your deceased Brother and Friend experienced this to be a pleasant and useful Ordinance, which he chose never to neglect. And what can have a greater Tendency to restrain from Sin, and promote the Virtues and Graces of the Divine Life, than the frequent devout Commemoration of the Good-will of God to Men, in sending his own Son to be *the Propitiation for the Sins of the World*; and of the Love of Jesus in giving himself for us, *to redeem us from all Iniquity, and purify to himself a peculiar People, zealous of good Works?*

5. Habituate yourselves early to the Thoughts of God, as your gracious Sovereign, constant Observer,

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Observer, bountiful Benefactor and future Judge; and when you are tempted to neglect your Duty, or do what you know is evil, reject the Solicitation with Disdain, as *Joseph* did, *Gen. xxxix. 9. How can I do this great Wickedness and Sin against God?*

6. Avoid the familiar Society, much more entering into the nearest Relation with those who are leud, debauched and profane, who make a Mock of Sin, and a Jest of Religion, and would attempt to laugh you out of a Regard to God and Christ, and your Souls. *For-sake the Foolish and live, and go in the Way of Understanding, Prov. ix. 6. If Sinners entice you, consent you not, Prov. i. 10.* But be you Companions of the Wise and Sober and Vertuous; *for he that walketh with wise Men shall be wise, but a Companion of Fools shall be destroyed, Prov. xiii. 10.* Let it be your unalterable Resolution, that, whatever others do, you will serve the Lord, by doing Justice, loving Mercy, and walking in all his Statutes and Ordinances, blameless; which is the only Preparation for leaving this World with Safety and Comfort, and for a blessed Immortality.

7. Do not adjourn this great Work to any future Season, lest you should never find one more convenient, but be hardened by the Deceitfulness of Sin. The very End of God in sending you into this World, and putting you
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in a State of Trial, was, that you might prepare for a future, unchangeable State, by a sober, righteous and godly Life. This is therefore the first Thing we should set about, and prosecute as long as we live. *Matt. vi. 33. Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness.*

Say not within thy Heart, *O vain Youth*, what Need so much Haste? I am young and healthful, and have many Years to live: For, *James iv. 14. What is thy Life, even a Vapour, that appeareth for a short Season, and then vanisheth away?* Your Language therefore ought to be that of your Saviour: *I must*, (and by the Help of God) *I will work the Works of him that sent me, while it is Day; the Night cometh when none can work,* *John ix. 4.* Remember the sad Case of the rich Fool in the Parable, *Luke xii. 16.* while he was pleasing himself with the idle Dream of many future Years to gratify his carnal Inclinations; saying, *Luke xii. 16. Soul, take thine Ease; eat, drink and be merry,* God said, *Thou Fool, this Night thy Soul shall be required.* *Prov. xxvii. 1. Boast not yourselves therefore of To-morrow, for ye know not what a Day shall bring forth.* To-day you are alive and in Health; To-morrow you may be seized by a mortal Fever, or other Distemper, and hurried away into Eternity. You have therefore no Time to lose, but had need to be up and doing before it is too late.

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I shall close all with a few Considerations, by Way of Motive to a continual Readiness.

1. Ready or Unready, we must go, when Death receives a Commission to arrest us, and therefore while we are delaying our Repentance, we are in continual Danger of being surprized. God's inexorable Messenger will not be diverted by the Plea of Youth, or Beauty, or Riches; nor bribed by extorted Promises of future Reformation; nor moved by the most importunate Cries: "O spare me a little, that I may recover Strength, to make a better Preparation, before I go hence." Our Times are in God's Hands, who can at any Time change our Countenance and send us away, and none can stay his Hand or resist his Power. In an Hour that you least expect, the Son of Man may come. What hath been the Case of others may soon be yours; and can you be easy while in continual Danger of a fatal Surprise?

2. Think again, what Confusion and Anguish will seize your guilty Souls on a sick and dying Bed, if surprized unready and in your Sins: You may now silence and stupify Conscience by frequent Resistance, Company and Liquors: You may take Pains to persuade yourselves, that there is no Difference between Virtue and Vice, nor any future Judgment; that the Gos-
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pel-Account of Heaven and Hell is a Fable ; and that you shall die like the Brutes and fall into unthinking Dust. But at the Approach of Death, Men are usually forced to entertain very different Sentiments ; their jovial Companions desert them ; their Principles of Infidelity fail them ; Conscience is then let loose, to present a black List of unpardoned Sins to the amazed Soul, and terrify it with dreadful Expectations of the Wrath of an abused Sovereign, and a miserable Eternity. O the Horror of an awakened Sinner, that finds his Life ending before his great Work of Preparation is begun ! Who feels he cannot live, and yet dare not die, but die he must ! In what an Agony wilt thou then cry to God, “ O spare me a little ! Cut me not off in the midst of my Days ” and my Sins ! Give me a short Reprieve, and “ I will live in a very different Manner ” ! With what earnest Looks will you beg the Prayers of your pious Friends and Ministers, whom you disregarded, during your Health and Stupidity ! How many thousand Fools and Madmen will you call yourselves for delaying your great Work ’till a sick and dying Bed !

O that you would foresee and prevent all this Terror and Confusion by a timely Preparation !
 Isa. lv. 6, 7. *Seek you the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near. Let the Wicked forsake his Way, and the unrighteous Man his*

his Thoughts, and turn to the Lord, while you are within the Reach of his Promise, that he will have Mercy upon you and abundantly pardon.

3. Timely Preparation for Death, by the habitual Practice of Piety and Virtue, or by Sobriety, Righteousness and Godliness, will be the most effectual Way to make you easy and happy in the present World.

Serious Religion is far from being that frightful, melancholy, unprofitable Thing you may imagine. 1 Tim. iv. 8. *Godliness is profitable to all Things, having Promise of the Life that now is, as well as of that to come.* Psal. xix. 11. *In keeping God's Commandments there is a great Reward.* Psal. cxix. 165. *Great Peace have they that love his Law.* Prov. iii. 17. *The Ways of Wisdom are Ways of Pleasantness, and all her Paths are Peace.* It restrains us from no Liberties that become our reasonable Natures, nor abridges us of any Pleasures but what are unmanly and injurious to ourselves or others, and in the room of the brutish Pleasures of Sense and Vice, it will furnish infinitely better; the Joys of a good Conscience, a Sense of the Favour of God, an Interest in Christ, and the Hopes of everlasting Blessedness. It will be the best Support under the Trials and Afflictions of the present Life; give us Honour and Reputation, render us beloved by God and

D 2

Man,

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Man, and embalm our Memory, when the Name of the Wicked shall rot.

To conclude,

4. Unspeakably great will be the future Happiness of those who are found ready; but extremely miserable their Condition who die in their Sins.

The Wicked is driven away in his Wickedness, but the Righteous hath Hope in his Death, Prov. xiv. 32. Mark the perfect Man, and behold the Upright, for the End of that Man is Peace, Psal. xxxvii. 37. 'Tis possible for wicked Men to die as stupid as they liv'd; but Death will open their Eyes, and convince them of the Reality of those Things they either disbelieved or would not consider; and then, with the Devils, they will believe and tremble. It is not only appointed to Men once to die, but after that the Judgment. The Son of Man will make a second Appearance, in his own Glory, the Glory of the Father, with his holy Angels; 1 Cor. xv. 52. The Trumpet shall sound, and the Dead be raised; and we must all appear before the Judgment-Seat of Christ, that every one may receive according to the Deeds done in the Body, whether good or evil, 2 Cor. v. 10. How dreadful will that Day be to those who die unprepared, in their Sins! How will they be able to hold up their Heads before him, as impartial Judge, after a Life of Disobedience

Death of Mr. Tho. Adams. 29

bedience to his Gospel ! What will they plead for themselves, or whom will they retain to intercede for them ! How will they bear that Sentence which must pass upon them, and be executed without Delay : *Matt. xxv. 41. Depart from me ye Cursed into everlasting Fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels.*

But, O the Blessedness of those who made it the Business of their Lives to prepare for the Coming of their Lord ! They will have Reason to rejoice at the Approach of Death, as a Friendly Messenger to convey them to the Mansions in their Father's House. When they are absent from the Body, they shall be present with the Lord : Their Bodies shall be raised glorious and incorruptible : They shall triumph at the Appearance of their Lord ; stand on the right Hand of the Judge, and hear that kind Sentence, *Matt. xxv. 34. Come ye Blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you. Ver. 23. Well done, good and faithful Servants, enter you into your Master's Joy ; so shall they be ever with the Lord, in whose Presence is Fulness of Joy, and Pleasures for evermore.*

And now, who can forbear crying, *Gather not my Soul with Sinners : Let me die the Death of the Righteous, and let my last End be like his. Be ye therefore ready. Make Haste, and delay*

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delay not to repent of your Sins, and believe on the Lord Jesus, and live the Life of the Righteous. *Eccles. ix. 10. Whatsoever thy Hand findeth to do, do it with thy Might; for there is no Work, nor Device, nor Knowledge, nor Wisdom in the Grave, whither thou goest.* Whatever is done for our Souls, must be done now or never; now, or we are undone for ever. God grant that all of us may know and pursue the Things that belong to our Peace, before they are hid from our Eyes,



The

The H Y M N.

'TIS but a short, uncertain Space
Allow'd us here to live;
Death, unperceiv'd, comes on a-pace,
And may no Warning give.

2.

Nor Great nor Small, nor Old nor Young,
His fatal Dart can fly;
The Rich, the Poor, the Weak, the Strong,
Without Distinction die.

3.

Each Day we live may be our last,
For any Thing we know,
Ere the next Minute shall be past,
We our last Breath may draw.

4.

And shall we trifle and delay,
And still keep sinning on;
Neglect our Souls from Day to Day,
'Till Life and Time is gone?

5.

The present Moment let us seize,
For that alone is ours;
Now set ourselves our God to please,
With all our Heart and Powers.

6.

To-day, while yet 'tis call'd To-day,
Let's hearken to his Voice;
Put every Lust and Sin away,
And make all Heav'n rejoice.

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